

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 GABORO 00767 171908Z
ACTION NODS-00

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 W
-----031894 171915Z /45

O 171105Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY GABORONE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1817
INFO AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM IMMEDIATE
AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY LAGOS IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY LILONGWE IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY MBABANE IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY PRETORIA IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY USUN IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T GABORONE 0767

EXDIS HANDLE AS NODIS

CAPE TOWN FOR EMBASSY

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PDEV RH BC
SUBJ: RHODESIA: BOTSWANA PRESIDENT'S PLANS FOR MEETING OF
FRONTLINE PRESIDENTS AND NATIONALIST LEADERS

REF: GABORONE 0742

1. UK HICOM TURNER TOLD ME MARCH 17 THAT HE HAD SPOKEN
PREVIOUS EVENING WITH CABINET SECRETARY STEENKAMP, WHO TOLD
HIM THAT FOLLOWING TURNER'S AND AMBASSADOR'S 14 MARCH MEETING
WITH PRESIDENT (GABORONE 0742), PRESIDENT HAD MET WITH TOP GOB
OFFICIALS AND HAD DECIDED THAT BOTSWANA SHOULD TAKE ACTION TO
ENCOURAGE FORWARD MOTION ON RHODESIA. STEENKAMP SAID THAT
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ACCORDINGLY PRESIDENT KHAMA WAS ATTEMPTING TO ARRANGE MEETING
BETWEEN FRONTLINE PRESIDENTS AND "NATIONALIST LEADERS".
APPARENTLY, THIS WOULD COME CLOSE TO A MEETING OF ALL PARTIES,
WITH POSSIBLE EXCEPTION OF SMITH AND CHIRAU, WHO, GOB BELIEVED,
WOULD NOT BE ACCEPTABLE TO OTHER PARTIES. STEENKAMP, WHO ASKED
THAT INFORMATION BE HELD IN STRICTEST CONFIDENCE, SAID THAT
KHAMA WOULD ATTEMPT TO WORK THROUGH PRESIDENT NYERERE, WHO

HE THOUGHT WOULD VIEW THE INITIATIVE FAVORABLY. HE THOUGHT THAT SUCH A MEETING MIGHT COME ABOUT IN APPROXIMATELY TWO WEEKS.

2. COMMENT: THIS NEWS COMES TO US AS A MOST WELCOME SURPRISE, SINCE WE HAVE LONG BELIEVED THAT BOTSWANA ENJOYS A HIGH MORAL AND RELATIVELY DETACHED POSITION WHICH SHOULD LEND IT MORE WEIGHT IN FRONTLINE COUNCILS THAN IT HAS HITHERTO CHOSEN TO EXPLOIT. IT IS DIFFICULT TO PREDICT THE FINAL SUCCESS OF THE GOB INITIATIVE (IF IN FACT IT IS EVER FULLY CARRIED OUT), BUT WE GUESS THAT PRESIDENT NYERERE MIGHT WELL BE RECEPTIVE TO IT. IF SO, A MEETING OF THE FRONTLINE PRESIDENTS AND NATIONALIST LEADERS IS A GOOD POSSIBILITY, ALTHOUGH IT WILL PROBABLY NOT INCLUDE THE LESS ACCEPTABLE ELEMENTS SUCH AS SMITH AND CHIRAU. ASSUME MUZOREWA AND SITHOLE WOULD BE INVITED, ALTHOUGH IT DIFFICULT TO PREDICT WHETHER THEY WILL ACCEPT. WE HAVE NO INDICATION WHETHER NIGERIA WOULD BE INCLUDED. END COMMENT.

3. UNLESS DEPARTMENT WISHES SPECIFIC POSTS TO EXPLOIT THIS INFORMATION IN CONTACTS WITH HOST GOVERNMENTS, WE SUGGEST IT BE HELD WITHIN USG/UK CHANNELS.

ALBERTI

SECRET

NNN

Message Attributes

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